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## Welcome the United States District Court for the District of Maryland's Newest Judge, Magistrate Judge Gina Simms

By Thomas Barnard

In 2017, the District of Maryland continued its tradition as one of the deepest and most accomplished benches in the country when new United States Magistrate Judge Gina Simms was sworn in as the Court's newest jurist. Joining the Southern Division in Greenbelt, Judge Simms returns to familiar territory where she has been a well-known practitioner of both civil and criminal law for many years. Known for her attention to detail, excellent client service, and creative problem solving, lawyers and litigants will quickly come to appreciate appearing before Judge Simms.

Prior to taking the Bench, Judge Simms worked as a Shareholder in the Government Enforcement and Investigations Practice Group at the law firm of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell, and Berkowitz, which merged the offices of long-time Baltimore firm Ober, Kaler, Grimes and Shriver in 2017. Judge Simms originally joined Ober|Kaler as a member of its Health Law Department in 2011, after 17 years of service in the federal government. While at the firm, Judge Simms was a critical part of helping grow the Health Law Department's national reputation.

Baker Donelson practice group chair and former United States Attorney Joe Whitley stated the following about Judge Simms: "I had the pleasure of being Gina's colleague at Baker Donelson. From working with her, I came to appreciate that her incredible intellect was matched by her common sense approach to cases. She provided our clients with superb advice and counsel. Although I was pleased that Gina was chosen to be a Magistrate Judge, I greatly miss her positive contribution to our firm in a myriad of ways." Another co-worker,

Howard Sollins, routinely worked closely with Judge Simms and stated, "She was my 'go to' partner when clients were in need of advice that combined an honest appraisal of a situation, compassion, and effective advocacy."

While serving in the federal government, Judge Simms worked in numerous roles, including as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Districts of Columbia and Maryland; the Criminal Health Care Fraud Coordinator; an Associate Independent Counsel investigating a former Secretary of Labor; and an Investigative Counsel at the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Regulation and Enforcement investigating allegations of wrongdoing by oil and gas companies engaged in offshore oil production.

When asked about the opportunity to serve on the Bench, Judge Simms noted she is "deeply humbled and honored to be able to serve as a Federal Magistrate Judge in the District of Maryland." She went on to say, "my first year on the Bench has been incredibly enriching and I look forward to continuing to serve the community."

Judge Simms is a graduate of Swarthmore College and the George Washington University Law School, and is a member of the Maryland, Pennsylvania, and District of Columbia Bars. In her time off the Bench, Judge Simms enjoys traveling, spending time with her family, and is an avid walker. On that point, she humorously noted that, according to her Fitbit, she has walked the distance of the Great Wall of China in three years.

Please join the Maryland Chapter of the Federal Bar Association in welcoming Magistrate Judge Simms.